

Inside Philanthropy



The State of
American Philanthropy

Giving for Global
Development

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ABOUT INSIDE PHILANTHROPY

Inside Philanthropy is a digital media site that covers the world of charitable giving. We report daily on foundations, major donors, and trends in philanthropy. Through our GrantFinder resource, we also profile and track thousands of funders working across key issue areas and geographic regions. Inside Philanthropy is supported by reader subscriptions and advertising. We do not receive funding from any other source. Learn more at insidephilanthropy.com

ABOUT THE STATE OF AMERICAN PHILANTHROPY

The State of American Philanthropy is a series of background papers on important topics and trends in U.S. philanthropy. The papers draw on past research and reporting by IP writers, as well as new interviews, grantmaking data, and other sources. Learn more at insidephilanthropy.com/state-of-american-philanthropy.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This brief addresses nongovernmental philanthropic support for United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to transform our world, excluding that covered in other State of American Philanthropy briefs. It focuses mainly on funding by institutions and individuals in the United States for work conducted principally in the Global South.

Aid by governments for economic development and welfare of Global South countries falls under the broad rubric of Official Development Aid (ODA). Total ODA rose to an all-time high of \$179 billion in 2021, up 4.4% in real terms from 2020 as Global North countries stepped up their help for Global South countries grappling with the COVID-19 crisis, according to preliminary data collected by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Philanthropic funding for global development, while far eclipsed by ODA amounts, has been growing over time. The 42 foundations included in the OECD's 2020 survey gave a total of \$10.4 billion for all global development categories. Subtracting grants for health sector projects and programs, all other sectors received \$6.6 billion in grants.

Private philanthropy tends to provide support in many of the same countries as ODA, and for similar types of projects, taking into account, as ODA does, the circumstances and needs in each country. Unlike ODA, however, philanthropic dollars rarely support work in very low income countries. Like ODA, private philanthropy provides support to organizations working in a wide range of sectors. In descending order of grant totals, the OECD lists the following sectors after health: agriculture; forestry and fishing; government and civil society; trade; education; environmental protection; finance and banking; water supply and sanitation; and infrastructure development.

This State of American Philanthropy brief explores:

Who's Giving

- Private philanthropy for development allocated \$42.5 billion over 2016–2019, an average of \$10.6 billion per year, according to a survey of 205 foundations worldwide by the OECD.
- Large private foundations are the largest givers in philanthropy's global development space, led by the Gates Foundation, whose giving for global development surpasses that of some bilateral and multilateral organizations. Subtracting its outsized contributions to health projects globally, the Gates Foundation still tops the list of private philanthropic givers to global development, more than double the amount given by the next highest-level giver.
- Additional big funders include Canada's MasterCard Foundation, the Open Society Foundations and the Ford Foundation.

Who's Getting

- Some top grant recipients include UNICEF, CARE International, Oxfam, the International Rescue Committee and Save the Children Federation.
- Providers of direct services in the Global South, the nonprofits noted above, receive grants from foundations, but much of their revenues are generated through small-dollar donations from individuals. A much larger percentage of revenue from foundations supports NGOs that, rather than providing direct services, conduct research, publish policy analyses and advocate for increased government support and other policies, and for multilateral support for international development.

The Big Issues and Funding Trends

- Private funders support global development in hundreds of countries on innumerable issues. This brief provides an overview across six major areas: global hunger and food systems; extreme poverty, banking finance and business services; gender equity; education and youth development; safe water; and advocacy.
- Some three-dozen grantmakers come together in the Agroecology Fund, a multidonor fund that supports just and sustainable food systems. AGRA (which until recently stood for Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa) receives some of the highest levels of funding in the global hunger space. Closely related to food security, extreme poverty is another focus of private philanthropists. Gates, Rockefeller, King Philanthropies and the Howard Buffett Foundation are significant givers in hunger and extreme poverty.
- Microcredit, the practice of making small loans to poor people to fund small businesses, is one type of program in the banking and finance realm. Another intervention in the finance space involves cash transfers, in which money is given to individuals in need to spend at their discretion.
- A central topic in gender equity is the issue of child marriage. One funder collaborative aimed at ending child marriage, the Girls First Fund, came together in 2019. Its core donors include the Children's Investment Fund, the Ford Foundation, Foundation for a Just Society and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.
- The two largest private funders supporting work for water access, sanitation and hygiene, according to analysis of Candid data, are Gates and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, which funds water projects in Ethiopia, Ghana and Uganda.
- Significant funders directing resources specifically to vulnerable children include the LEGO Foundation, Children's Investment Fund and the ELMA Foundation.

Equity in the Sector

- Some funders are directly addressing racial inequity in global development. Moore Impact, a collaborative partner and 501(c)(3) exempt entity under Moore Philanthropy, is fiscal sponsor and partner of the Racial Equity Index. The REI initiative has announced that it is producing an index and advocacy tools that will provide greater accountability for racial equity within and across the global development sector in order to dismantle structural racism and create a more equitable system and culture with justice and dignity at its core.

- In addition to racial and ethnic equity, philanthropy addresses a range of equity issues, including discrimination against women and girls, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people, low-income people, religious minorities, rural residents, and immigrants and refugees.
- The OECD's data on private philanthropy for development show that in 2017, 15% of philanthropic funding from 26 of the largest foundations worldwide had the objective of supporting gender equality and women's empowerment, which amounts to \$900 million for that year.

Governments agreed on reaching the SDGs by 2030, and until the confluence of crises in 2019 to 2022 and the slowdown in the global economy, progress toward the goals was on the march. Now, much of that progress – in rates of poverty, prevalence of hunger, measures of gender equity – has receded to levels reached in the mid-2010s. But as IP's Liz Longley reported, the 2022 U.N. General Assembly and coinciding nongovernmental events sparked some hope, with the announcement of [numerous big-dollar donor commitments](#).

Experts say that philanthropic aid programs are not the driving force behind global development, but they can support important progress as low-income countries develop economic and political infrastructure. With more flexibility and, frankly, less accountability than governments and multilaterals, private philanthropy has a crucial role to play in regaining lost ground.

Introduction

While many equate the topic of global development with economic development of low-income countries, global development is a broad term encompassing efforts by countries, organizations and individuals to reduce inequality, protect the planet and improve lives in myriad ways. Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen contends that development is the expansion of freedoms people can enjoy. “Development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom,” Sen wrote, “poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states.” In that light, the topic of global development could include innumerable philanthropic efforts – especially those that are long-term and aimed at systemic change – anywhere in the world.

An increasing number of government, nonprofit and philanthropic supporters are framing their global development efforts in relation to the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) to transform our world:

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequality
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production

13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

All the countries of the United Nations have agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, outlining these 17 goals to achieve “dignity, peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and in the future.” SDGs can be useful in drawing the parameters of global development as they relate to areas of funder interest.

Other State of American Philanthropy briefs examine philanthropic funding for some of the SDGs, including Goal 3 in [Giving for Global Health](#), Goal 13 in [Giving for Climate Change and Clean Energy](#) and Goal 16 in [Giving for Global Humanitarian Assistance](#).

This brief addresses nongovernmental philanthropic support for many of the rest. It focuses mainly on funding by institutions and individuals in the United States for work conducted principally in the Global South or the so-called “developing world.” (This term’s usefulness and accuracy are debated and many find it judgmental. This brief will use the term “Global South” instead. Despite its imprecision (for example, Haiti is geographically in the Global North and Australia is in the Global South), the term is free of the negative connotations of other words and phrases.

Aid from governments for economic development and welfare of Global South countries falls under the broad rubric of Official Development Aid (ODA). Total ODA rose to an all-time high of \$179 billion in 2021, up 4.4% in real terms from 2020 as Global North countries increased aid to Global

South countries grappling with the COVID-19 crisis, according to preliminary data collected by the OECD.

Countries receiving the most ODA in 2020 were India, Bangladesh, Syria, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Jordan, Iraq, Somalia and Myanmar (listed in descending order of aid received). Added together, the share of bilateral aid to this group is 20% of the total. The types of projects supported vary among the countries. For example, over half of official aid to India (56%) and Bangladesh (64%) supports economic infrastructure, while the lion's share of aid to Syria (78%) goes toward humanitarian aid. Overall, about 20% of ODA is categorized by the OECD as supporting education, health and population; 18.6% goes toward other social infrastructure; 17.1% supports economic infrastructure; and 12.9% is humanitarian aid.

Philanthropic funding for global development, while far eclipsed by ODA amounts, has been growing over time. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development provides aggregated data on private philanthropy for global development. The [OECD dataset](#) includes project-level information for more than 40 of the largest private foundations working for development. (Non-U.S. foundations are included.) According to this report, the 42 foundations included in 2020 gave a total of \$10.4 billion for all global development categories. Subtracting grants for health sector projects and programs, all other sectors received \$6.6 billion in grants.

Private philanthropy tends to provide support in many of the same countries as ODA, and for similar types of projects, taking into account, as ODA does, the circumstances and needs in each country. For example, in places where conflict is prevalent,

humanitarian support dominates; this kind of support is not the principal focus of this brief. In middle-income countries, economic and other infrastructure projects that hew more closely to the idea of global economic development draw the lion's share of support. Philanthropy, said the OECD in its first examination of private giving for global development, "favors investing in stable, middle-income economies and through large, established partners, such as international organizations and NGOs." According to the OECD, only a small fraction of philanthropic financing is directed toward low-income countries.

The OECD disaggregated its data on philanthropic giving by region. From 2016 to 2019, Latin America and the Caribbean received the most funding from international and domestic sources combined, with \$6.7 billion (16%). (This funding was provided primarily by Spain's BBVA Microfinance Foundation and large domestic organizations in Mexico, Colombia and Brazil.) The South Asia region received the second-highest dollar amount of both international and domestic philanthropy, with \$6.3 billion (15%). In terms of cross-border philanthropy alone, a category that U.S. philanthropies dominate, sub-Saharan Africa was the top recipient region, with \$5.5 billion (13%). The other regions—East Asia and Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa, and Europe and Central Asia—received relatively less funding.

Like ODA, private philanthropy provides support to organizations working in a wide range of sectors. In descending order of grant totals, the OECD lists the following sectors after health: agriculture, forestry and fishing; government and civil society; trade; education; environmental protection; finance and banking; water supply and sanitation; and infrastructure development.

The Lay of the Land

Who's Giving

The pace and scope of extreme wealth growth in the U.S. among a concentration of individuals and institutions has seen a related rise in philanthropic flows for a wide variety of causes, and giving for global development is a case in point. A survey of 205 foundations worldwide by the OECD revealed that private philanthropy for development allocated \$42.5 billion over 2016–2019, an average of \$10.6 billion per year. The OECD found the average philanthropic flow for years 2013–2015 was \$2 billion lower. The increase over time is partly because fewer foundations (143) were included in the survey, but all the biggest givers were on both lists, and many foundations also increased their global giving over the earlier years.

Large private foundations are the largest givers in philanthropy's global development space, led by the Gates Foundation, whose giving for global development surpasses that of some bilateral and multilateral organizations (entities set up to coordinate the work of three or more nations to direct foreign aid). U.S. foundations provide the bulk of private funding overall, but in a few countries, such as India and Mexico, domestic donors are the biggest givers. But foundations are not the only players in this arena.

Corporations also make grants for global development, particularly on topics related to the focus of their businesses, such as finance and food and agriculture. While private foundations are distributing some high-dollar grants, corporations operate in many more places. According to the Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose (CECP) global giving survey, nearly all the companies that

made international contributions deemed it extremely important to work toward the SDGs. Corporate funders' role in global development is discussed in more depth in the Corporate Funders section of this brief.

And as the number and assets of ultra-high-net-worth individuals have ballooned in recent years, their philanthropic dollars have flowed overseas, as well. Perhaps the most notable donor in this category is MacKenzie Scott, whose global giving is on the rise. (More on Scott's giving below.)

Subtracting its outsized contributions to health globally, the Gates Foundation still tops the list of private philanthropic givers to global development, more than twice the amount given by the next highest-level giver. Gates' grants support a wide range of development issues, including gender equality, education, inclusive finance, nutrition, basic sanitation, and agriculture, fishing and forestry.

No. 2 on the OECD list (sans health), the Mastercard Foundation, based in Canada, supports programs that enable young people in Africa and in Indigenous communities in Canada to access dignified and fulfilling work. The foundation's Scholars Program has supported nearly 40,000 young people, and by 2030, will double its reach to 100,000 young people, primarily in Africa. Since the initiative's inception in 2012, it has made grants totaling \$1.7 billion to benefit nearly 40,000 young people, over 72% of whom are young women. \$121 million, 41% of its spending in 2019, went to Kenya, Uganda and Ghana.

Another big American grantmaker, the Open Society Foundations, makes grants that aim to build "inclusive and vibrant democracies." Focus areas

that fall under global development include democratic practice, economic equity and justice, education, equality and antidiscrimination, and justice reform and the rule of law. In 2020, this network of George Soros-funded foundations made more than 50,000 grants totaling \$1.4 billion. Almost one-quarter (23.6%), or \$235.9 million, supported democratic practice globally, which OSF defines as “efforts to ensure that governments respond to the challenges of the day and the needs of all their people.” Active in 120 countries around the globe, OSF makes grants on almost every continent and in dozens of Global South countries, including Haiti, Brazil and Mexico in the Americas; Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana in sub-Saharan Africa; Jordan and

Tunisia in the Middle East and North Africa; Pakistan, Afghanistan and Myanmar in the Asia Pacific region.

Former OSF President Christopher Stone observed in an interview with Philanthropy 360 that the mission of many foundations is to solve problems. OSF, on the other hand, wants to work on the “insoluble problems – justice, migration, rights, good governance,” he said. “These will never be solved. Human beings will always find ways to compromise systems of justice, rights will always be violated and governments will always be wrong in one or another aspect of their programs.”

Top 15 Funders to Know in the OECD Compilation

Institution	Country Base	Development Funding 2020 (Minus health, USD millions)	Development Funding Total 2020 (USD millions)
Gates Foundation	United States	1,954	4,610
Mastercard Foundation	Canada	787	871
Wellcome Trust	United Kingdom	481	532
BBVA Microfinance Foundation	Spain	365	925
United Postcode Lotteries (combined)	Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, UK	319	357
Open Society Foundations	United States	317	341
Children's Investment Fund Foundation	United Kingdom	302	359
Ford Foundation	United States	233	238
Dutch Postcode Lottery	Netherlands	222	222
IKEA Foundation	Sweden	162	162
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	United States	156	160
Oak Foundation	United Kingdom	152	155
David and Lucile Packard Foundation	United States	141	145
Bloomberg Family Foundation	United States	38	194
Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation	United States	N/A	318

One topic on which OSF is a leader is workers' rights. OSF is one of several heavy-hitter foundations that make up a collaborative of donors called FORGE (Fundators Organized for Rights in the Global Economy), which seeks to create a global economy that works for everyone. And in late 2022, as IP's Martha Ramirez [reported](#), OSF was one of a group of philanthropic institutions that joined the Biden administration's Multilateral Partnership for Organizing, Worker Empowerment and Rights (M-POWER) initiative, a cross-sector partnership to support workers' rights as a central tenet of democracy. Others were the Ford Foundation, Fundación Avina and Humanity United.

The Ford Foundation supports global development efforts in 11 regions across Africa, Asia, Latin America and North America especially focused on making a global impact on the systems and structures that perpetuate inequality. The \$238 million included in the OECD's global development calculation encompassed 1,947 grants. Top sectors in 2020 included democratic participation and civil society, women's rights, media and free flow of information, and social protection, which the

Funder Spotlight



Founded by a group of finance professionals in 2000, EMpower's global reach now includes 15 emerging market countries around the world. With gender equity and inclusion at the center of its grantmaking, EMpower focuses its work on marginalized youth and invests in programs that help them increase learning opportunities, access local economies, and lead safe and healthy lives. Its many grantees include the Network for Women in Growth, United Through Sport, and Fundación Nordelta.

World Bank defines as “systems [that] help poor and vulnerable people cope with crises and shocks, find jobs, invest in the health and education of their children, and protect the aging population.”

With the belief that meaningful civic engagement is an antidote to inequality, in October 2022, Ford launched an \$80 million program, Weaving Resilience, to fortify the resilience of civil society organizations in the Global South. The initiative supports organizations working in eight regions in Asia, Africa and Latin America through localized yet interrelated resource hubs in 12 countries.

“Weaving Resilience will build resilient and impactful institutions that center transcendent values like justice and human dignity, with an explicit commitment to an expansive analysis of voice, rights and power,” said Helena Hofbauer Balmori, international program director for civic engagement and government at the foundation.

Of course, smaller foundations add to the picture of private philanthropy for global development, although they may not define their giving as such. One example is the Emerging Markets Foundation, which supports around 100 local organizations that work to enable marginalized young people to flourish. EMpower makes grants and offers capacity-building in 15 emerging markets, including Russia, Turkey and Hong Kong. Although EMpower does not tend to use global development as a frame, its impact areas—economic wellbeing; safe, healthy lives; and inclusive learning — align explicitly with the SDGs, specifically SDG 3, Good Health and Wellbeing; SDG 4, Quality Education; SDG 5, Gender Equality; and SDG 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth.

The bulk of EMpower’s funding comes from almost 50 “underwriters” from the U.S., the U.K. and Hong Kong. They include individuals, corporations, financial institutions and at least one foundation, BBVA. In 2021, EMpower made well over 100 grants, most of which were in the \$30,000 to \$70,000 range.

Another, smaller foundation in the global development space is Thousand Currents Foundation, a public charity foundation. Based in San Francisco, Thousand Currents supports Global South grassroots organizations working to transform their communities, focusing principally on three areas: climate justice, economic justice and food sovereignty. In addition, the foundation offers resources and programs for donors and philanthropic institutions to shift their behavior and practices toward solidarity-based philanthropy.

Who’s Getting

Because of the wide range of topics included in global development, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive and accurate list of the largest nonprofit recipients of grantmaking in this sprawling field. But a perusal of grant recipients working in numerous categories in the Global South reveals some of the biggest grantees. UNICEF, for example, works around the globe to ensure that children thrive. Many of UNICEF’s efforts are health-related, but the massive organization also supports children through numerous other programs. These include education, gender equality and empowerment, and child protection, which encompasses preventing violence against children and ending child trafficking. United States Fund for UNICEF, which collects donations from U.S. donors, reported \$564 million in grants and contributions in 2018. Candid’s database shows that the U.S. Fund for

UNICEF received \$561 million in total grants for the years 2016 through 2020.

Another giant in the space is CARE International, which receives donations from multilateral and bilateral funders as well as foundations and individual donors. Donor contributions to the organization’s 14 country offices totaled \$209.4 million USD in 2018. Candid’s database shows that CARE received \$293 million for the years 2016 through 2020.

An additional top recipient has been Oxfam, whose total revenues for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2021, were \$118.6 million, with contributions of \$98.4 million. Oxfam, a global organization that fights inequality to end poverty and injustice, has suffered under the weight of scandals. The first involved “aid workers paying for sex work amid relief efforts following the 2010 Haiti earthquake, and it brought up issues of power abuses, colonial mindsets and unaccountable Western leadership that many NGOs have been grappling with for years,” writes Raj Kumar of Devex, a media platform for the global development community. In 2020, Oxfam laid off almost a third of its program staff and pulled out of 18 countries. “Then another scandal hit, involving allegations of sexual misconduct, bullying and nepotism in the Democratic Republic of Congo.” Whether the nonprofit can weather this newer storm remains to be seen.

The International Rescue Committee is another significant nonprofit providing programs and initiatives that fall under the global development rubric. While the organization is perhaps best known for resettling refugees, it also provides malnutrition prevention assistance, infrastructure for water sources and education to children and

youth. Its 2021 revenue from all sources was just short of \$1 billion, at \$979,512. While the greatest portion (42%) of its total spending of \$939 million addressed health needs, 26% addressed safety issues, 20% supported programs aimed at economic wellbeing, including the ability to provide basic material needs, as well as income and asset growth; 9% supported education programs.

10 Global Development Recipients to Watch

CARE
Catholic Relief Services
Clinton Foundation
Direct Relief
Oxfam America
Rotary Foundation of Rotary International
Save the Children
Unicef
United Nations Foundation
World Vision

Save the Children Federation, headquartered in the U.K., works in more than 100 countries and claims to be the world’s leading expert on childhood. Candid reports the U.S. arm of the nonprofit garnered \$177 million in grants between the years 2016 and 2020, a fraction of the nonprofit’s total revenues. In 2021, only 3% of the revenue of Save the Children US came from foundations. The largest portion (47%) was funded by the U.S. government; 10 % came from corporations, 21 % from individuals, and 17% from the U.N. and other multilateral funders.

Providers of direct services in the Global South, the nonprofits noted above, receive grants from foundations, but much of their revenues are

generated through small-dollar donations from individuals. A much larger percentage of revenue from foundations supports NGOs that, rather than providing direct services, conduct research, publish policy analyses, and advocate for policies and for increased government, and bilateral and multilateral support for international development. One example, the Center for Global Development, a 20-year-old nonpartisan nonprofit, works to reduce global poverty and improve lives through innovative economic research that drives better policy and practice by the world’s top decision-makers. The organization received a total of \$25.8 million in 30 grants from nine U.S. foundations in 2020, according to Candid, of a reported total of \$26.8 million in grants and contributions.

Another such organization is the Global Development Incubator, which bills itself as “an incubator for transformational development ventures, working to build and scale the next generation of social impact solutions.” GDI has received grant support from the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, the Hilton Foundation, the Gates Foundation, Mackenzie Scott and others. One of its “incubatees,” ISF Advisors, is a leading strategic and financial advisory group that aims to mobilize capital for a more sustainable, equitable and productive global food system. ISF’s extensive research on agriculture and food systems generates ideas and insights to inform investment strategy for public and private funders. Another GDI offshoot is Village Enterprise, which works to end extreme poverty in rural Africa through entrepreneurship and innovation. Its poverty graduation program, using digital technology and a group-based approach equips Africans living in extreme poverty with cash transfers, training, and mentoring to create income-generating, sustainable businesses and savings groups.

Getting & Giving: A Deeper Dive

The lion’s share of private aid for development supports health objectives, thanks largely to the contributions of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; as stated earlier, this brief does not focus on development funding for health objectives.

Private funders support global development in hundreds of countries on innumerable issues. This section provides samples of grants across six major areas: global hunger and food systems; extreme poverty, banking finance and business services; gender equity; education and youth development; safe water; and advocacy.

Sector	Grants (Millions)	Percentage of Total
Health and reproductive health	\$4,360	49.4%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	\$970	11.0%
Government and civil society	\$583	6.6%
Trade	\$519	5.9%
Education	\$419	4.8%
Environment protection	\$387	4.4%
Banking, finance and business services	\$379	4.3%
Transportation, energy and communications	\$273	3.1%
Other social infrastructure and services	\$272	3.1%
Water supply and sanitation	\$144	1.6%
Humanitarian aid	\$143	1.6%
Other sectors	\$369	4.2%
TOTAL	\$8,180	100%
TOTAL without HEALTH	\$4,458	50.6%

Source: OECD

Global Hunger and Food Systems. The world’s fragile food systems are under enormous strain, and prices of basic staple foods and the fertilizer used to grow them are increasing worldwide. Conflict and insecurity are the most prominent causes of food insecurity, joined by battered economies and climate change’s impact on agricultural output. The 2022 “Global Report on Food Crises,” by the Global Network Against Food Crises, found that some 193 million people in 2021 were acutely food insecure and in need of assistance across 53 countries and territories.

AGRA (which until recently stood for Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa) receives some of the highest levels of funding in this area. The NGO received \$40 million from the Gates Foundation in 2021 “to support the advancement of inclusive agricultural transformation on the African continent through strengthened systems and scaling of innovations that improve productivity and incomes of small-scale producers.” AGRA, which has also received support from the Rockefeller Foundation and governmental aid organizations from the U.S., U.K., Canada and Germany, has drawn criticism. Even a donor-commissioned evaluation of AGRA revealed serious shortcomings in the initiative’s efforts to “catalyze a farming revolution in Africa.” Beyond AGRA, the “Green Revolution” approach itself is widely criticized for its negative social and environmental consequences. Perhaps signifying a recognition of the criticism, AGRA recently dropped “Green Revolution” from its name and now goes by its acronym only.

Some three-dozen grantmakers come together in the Agroecology Fund, a multi-donor fund that supports just and sustainable food systems. (Members include American Jewish World Service,

Ben & Jerry's Foundation, Grassroots International, Open Society Foundations, the McKnight Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Swift Foundation.) Since its founding in 2012, the fund has awarded \$14.4 million to hundreds of organizations in 82 countries. Agroecology promoters, guided by "an ethos of bio and cultural diversity featuring small farmer-centered applied research and policies that protect their livelihoods," work to nurture a healthy ecosystem in which to grow the world's food and fiber, according to the fund. Most of its grants are in the \$50,000 to \$100,000 range and support sets of collaborative partners; many of these include indigenous groups, rural women groups, village development committees and the like.

Another funder collaborative addressing hunger was created in late 2021. [Stronger Foundations for Nutrition](#) created a new community of private funders focused on financing the nutrition agenda. IP reported that by the end of 2021, Stronger Foundations had built a coalition that collectively represents \$1 billion in commitments in 2021, and it plans to build on that. Besides representing a wide range of funders, the coalition spans four continents, with King Philanthropies, Rotary International, the Eleanor Crook Foundation and the Gates Foundation from North America; the U.K.'s Children's Investment Fund Foundation; Switzerland's Larsson-Rosenquist in Europe; Nigeria's Dangote Foundation in Africa; Asia is represented in Nepal by Chaudhary Foundation, and in India by Tata Trusts.

A significant giver in the food security space is Howard Buffett, son of investor Warren Buffett. The Howard G. Buffett Foundation's support for global food security is primarily directed toward agricultural resource development and

management for smallholder farmers in the Global South. The foundation, which sees its resources as "rare risk capital that can be deployed to improve conditions and create change in the most difficult circumstances and geographies," has made a huge commitment to food production in Rwanda. It is "one of the most ambitious big bets in global development by any grantmaker today," wrote IP founder and editor David Callahan. The foundation also works across Central America – one of the few major funders that prioritize the region – as well as in Colombia and the United States.

The foundation's biggest grantee on the African continent is the Rwanda Institute of Conservation Agriculture (RICA), which admitted its first students in 2019, and is built on land donated by the Rwandan government. But the cost of constructing the school, along with its operating budget for the first 10 years, is likely to run around \$175 million and is being covered by the foundation.

Collaboration Spotlight



When the Agroecology Fund launched in 2012, it had just four founding donors--the Christensen Fund, New Field Foundation, Swift Foundation and one anonymous donor. It has since grown to include 66 collaborating organizations in 82 countries around the world. The fund awards a modest amount of grants per year, typically around \$1 million in total. The fund uses a participatory philanthropic model which relies on international advisors and long-term local partners to support sustainable food systems that promote the well-being and rights of small holder farmers, Indigenous people and their communities.

Extreme poverty. Closely related to food security, extreme poverty is another focus of private philanthropists. The poorest in the world are often undernourished, without access to basic services such as electricity and safe drinking water; they have less access to education and suffer from much poorer health. The good news is that the share of people living in extreme poverty around the world has been declining for two centuries, and for 20 years, the positive trajectory was faster than ever until the COVID pandemic. The pandemic caused unprecedented reversals in poverty reduction that are further exacerbated by inflation and the effects of the war in Ukraine, the World Bank reported in a [blog post](#). If the bank's more pessimistic scenario plays out, 2022 may have been the second-worst year in terms of progress made in reducing extreme poverty this century—behind only 2020, when there was an actual increase in global poverty.

King Philanthropies, founded in 2016 and a relative newcomer to big-time philanthropy, says its mission is to “make a meaningful difference in the lives of the world’s poorest people by multiplying the impact of high-performing leaders and organizations.” Founded by investors Bob and Dottie King, the foundation launched the first of its seven initiatives, King Essentials, in 2017. The aim is to address fundamental essential needs, including agriculture, early childhood development, land rights and primary healthcare through proven interventions of high-performing organizations.

“One feature of King Philanthropies that makes it distinctive is our strategic emphasis supporting high-performing leaders and organizations,” foundation President Kim Starkey said in Michael Kavate’s 2020 [piece](#) on the foundation in IP. “In our view, it is not enough to fund promising programs or initiatives.” The foundation has always focused

on extreme poverty, with a special emphasis on leadership. King looks for organizations with a clear mission, defined strategy, and a commitment to rigorous evaluation, elements Starkey championed in a book she co-wrote, “Engine of Impact.”

Until this year, approximately 800 million people worldwide didn’t have access to electricity, Rockefeller Chief Financial Officer Dominick Impemba told Inside Philanthropy in 2020. As IP’s Paul Karon wrote then, Rockefeller’s leadership believes that access to electricity is about access to economic opportunity—about plugging that bottom billion into a modern economy. In 2020, Rockefeller announced a three-year, \$1 billion plan to catalyze private and public investment in green/renewable energy systems in undeveloped parts of Africa and Asia.

In another effort, the ONE Campaign is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization that aims to direct private resources toward the SDG goals. ONE addresses the big causes of extreme poverty and preventable disease, particularly in Africa. Among other issues, the campaign addresses gender equality, youth employment, quality education and access to health services. ONE also educates the public and raises awareness of the crisis of extreme poverty around the globe and the progress being made against it.

The Gates Foundation is a top supporter of ONE, with three grants worth a total of \$49 million awarded in 2020 – the nonprofit’s largest annual total from the Gates Foundation since 2013, when it received \$52 million. Its biggest Gates grant in 2020 was for \$40 million, directed to general operating support for the coming four years. Additional donors include the Caterpillar, Ford, Packard, Rockefeller and Sherwood foundations.

Banking, finance, and business services.

Financial inclusion, the World Bank says, is a key enabler to reducing poverty and boosting prosperity. Currently, some 1.7 billion people worldwide are excluded from formal financial services such as savings, payments, insurance and credit. In developing economies, only 63% of adults have an account, and nearly 1 billion women are disproportionately excluded from beneficial financial systems.

The Gates Foundation is a major funder of financial inclusion, based on its belief that financial exclusion is a significant driver in the cycle of poverty. One of Gates' partners in its financial inclusion program is Innovations for Poverty Action, a nonprofit that conducts rigorous research to understand which development interventions work, which do not, and why. With offices in the United States and in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the organization also disseminates the research findings and equips decision makers, such as funders and policymakers, to use the evidence to improve the lives of the global poor.

Microcredit, the practice of making small loans to poor people to fund small businesses, is one type of program in the banking and finance realm. Early claims about microcredit's benefits failed by most

measures to live up to the promise of lifting people out of poverty. But there is little doubt that microcredit can improve the lives of poor people by stabilizing their financial lives.

Whole Planet Foundation supports a network of microfinance institutions internationally and in the United States. As of June 2022, Whole Planet Foundation had disbursed \$101 million through microlending partners worldwide, funding 6 million microloans. The foundation is funded by Whole Foods Market customers (at 39% of its total revenue), Whole Foods Market (33%), Whole Foods Market suppliers (14%), other individual donors (3%) and corporate donors (2%).

Another intervention in the finances space involves cash transfers, in which money is given to individuals in need to spend at their discretion. The effectiveness of cash transfers has a strong evidence base. Furthermore, the rapid growth of mobile payments technology in emerging markets has opened the door to delivering cash transfers securely and efficiently on an unprecedented scale. The nonprofit GiveDirectly, created as a private giving circle in 2009 and opened to the public in 2011, is supported by individuals, foundations and corporations. The Silicon Valley Community Foundation gave the organization a \$50 million grant in 2021. It has also received grants from the Google.org Corporate Giving Program, the New York Community Trust, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the Good Ventures Foundation and the Schusterman Family Philanthropies, to name a few.

Gender equity. As IP's Liz Longley [reported](#) in March 2022, notable gender equity alliances among funding institutions and individuals have emerged recently, like the more than \$48 million Equity Can't Wait collaboration last August between

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"More funding is needed for international development work that truly honors decisions initiated by the developing community itself. Long-term international work - not just relief and not short-term experiences resulting in great photos extracted from the community by donors. Not exaggerated impact figures, but true international community development."

—Fundraiser, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Melinda French Gates, MacKenzie Scott and the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies. Another \$2.6 billion from Open Society Foundations and the Gates and Ford foundations was collectively committed to gender equity issues at the Generation Equality Forum in Paris in June 2021.

The philanthropic collaborative Co-Impact launched another such effort in 2022, a 10-year Gender Fund that aims to raise and grant \$1 billion in large-scale, long-term and flexible funding to predominantly women-led, locally rooted organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Challenging laws and social norms and rewriting the policies and processes of government are all on the table, along with a commitment to generating and sharing the research and data needed to ensure real change. By March 2022, the Gender Fund had already raised commitments exceeding \$320 million from some of the world's largest institutional funders, including the Gates and Rockefeller foundations, and big-name individual donors like MacKenzie Scott.

The first set of grants will address major barriers to gender equity like gender-based violence, maternal health, gender-inclusive education and women's leadership. They include funding for India-based maternal health leader ARMMAN; the global human rights champion Clooney Foundation for Justice; International Association of Women Justices; Nossas Cidades, which mobilizes activism in Brazil and Latin America; research leader Partnership for Economic Policy; and Red ALAS | Universidad Torcuato de Tella.

A central topic in gender equity is the issue of child marriage. A global problem based on gender inequality and exacerbated by poverty, lack of

education, and harmful social norms, child marriage is a human rights violation. As Julia Travers [reported](#) in IP, girls who do not marry in childhood are more likely to live longer, go to school, work and have more money, choose when and if to have children, avoid child mortality and be free of domestic abuse and health issues.

One funder collaborative aimed at ending child marriage, the Girls First Fund, came together in 2019. Its core donors include the Children's Investment Fund, the Ford Foundation, Foundation for a Just Society, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. To date, \$11.4 million in grants have been committed, and 85% of the grants have supported women-led organizations.

Grantee Spotlight



Since its launch in 2011, Girls Not Brides has grown from 50 member organizations to over 1,600 and has contributed to a 15% decrease in child marriage (around 25 million girls) worldwide. The Ford Foundation is a long-time supporter of Girls Not Brides and recently awarded the organization a \$2 million general support grant. Other donors include Nationale Postcode Loterij, Kendeda Fund, and the Packard and Gates foundations. Girls Not Brides also receives support from country governments and the United Nations Population Fund.

In 2022, three powerhouse women philanthropists joined forces on the matter. IP's Liz Longley [wrote](#) about the collaboration, reporting that the three came together to boost the Girls Opportunity Alliance's Get Her There campaign, an initiative of the Obama Foundation that aims to help girls realize their full potential. The three champions' commitments include advocating for organizations

that work to end the practice and advance gender equity, advancing litigation to end laws permitting the practice, and creating and sharing evidence and insights that broaden an understanding of the ways child marriage holds girls back.

Safe water. An estimated 2 billion people, one-quarter of the world's population, still go without access to safe water, according to the World Health Organization. Unsafe drinking water is a driving factor behind migration and related displacement issues. Furthermore, it is the principal reason for the more than 1.5 million deaths every year from diarrhea, most of them infants and small children.

The largest private funders supporting work for water access, sanitation and hygiene, according to Candid, are Gates and the Hilton Foundation, which funds projects in Ethiopia, Ghana and Uganda.

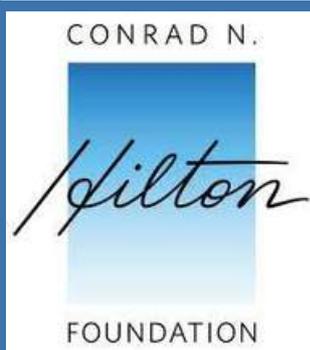
Candid's top recipients in this sector include International Rescue Committee, with \$21 million in grants for water access, sanitation and hygiene from the Hilton Foundation between 2016 and 2021. Hilton has also supported the Safe Water Network with more than \$10 million in that time period, as well as World Vision and Millennium Water Alliance, both with more than \$9 million, and Splash with \$6 million for water-related work. The foundation has also made grants in this area to the World Resources Institute and Water.org.

On a recommendation from GiveWell, an independent charity evaluator, Open Philanthropy awarded \$64.7 million in January 2022 to the Dispensers for Water Initiative created by Evidence Action. IP's Liz Longley wrote about the GiveWell and Open Philanthropy partnership and the rigorous research that led to the large gift, which is expected to double the reach of Dispensers for Safe Water in a number of African countries and reduce the water mortality of children under five by up to 25%.

In 2022, the NGO Water.org announced a \$1 billion plan to help bring new water delivery and wastewater treatment projects to underserved communities, then use those communities' utility bills to fund further projects, the Associated Press [reported](#). Amazon donated the first \$10 million of philanthropic money needed for the fund.

Education, youth development. Overall, foundations working in Global South countries are an important source of funding for education. Between 2016 and 2019, an OECD survey of foundations working in developing countries revealed that philanthropy allocated on average \$2 billion yearly toward the education sector. In aggregate, philanthropic giving represented the eighth-largest source of funding for education, after six bilateral and two multilateral ODA donors.

Program Spotlight



The Hilton Foundation's Safe Water program focuses on scaling, system strengthening and the delivery of reliable, affordable and safe water to disadvantaged communities. Since it began its work in this field in 1990 to help eradicate Guinea Worm, Hilton has awarded more than \$31 million in Safe Water program grants. Recent grantees include Water Aid America, Catholic Relief Services' Safe Water Initiative and Care Inc., to support its gender equity work in Ethiopia's Ministry of Water and Environment.

A 2019 OECD report on philanthropic giving for education in Global South countries highlighted four broad strategies that foundations were pursuing – often simultaneously – to move the needle in favor of quality education for all: filling gaps, especially for particularly vulnerable populations; testing innovations; co-investing with ODA donors to scale up impact; and strengthening government monitoring systems.

OECD's study reveals that in the education realm, institutions of higher education, such as universities, received the most support from philanthropic donors, either as direct support or as scholarships for advanced education. Vocational training and school infrastructure absorbed significant funding from domestic donors, such as India's Reliance Industries CSR, while early childhood education received more support from cross-border funders. The largest international foundation in education was the Mastercard Foundation, followed by the Andrew W. Mellon and the Michael and Susan Dell foundations.

One crucial funder helping vulnerable children is the LEGO Foundation. Established in 1986, the Denmark-based foundation supports global research and initiatives for early childhood and K-12 education, centered on the idea and ideals of the "power of play," which data and science have shown to build the cognitive, social, emotional, creative and physical skills that build resiliency in kids, whatever the future holds. At the same time, the grantmaker steps up when crisis situations upend children's lives. As Liz Longley [wrote](#), the foundation's activity has kept pace with these extraordinary times. Levels of support have risen from roughly \$57 million in 2016 to \$214 million in 2020.

The ELMA foundation, [profiled](#) in IP in 2021, is a major philanthropic player in South Africa. Funded projects include boosting a remote learning platform with the Aga Kahn Foundation and addressing child and family food insecurity through the 13 community centers of the ACFS Community Education and Feeding Scheme. The foundation also recognizes the importance of supporting the adults that care for children, joining efforts like Gates Philanthropy Partners' Therapeutics and Diagnostic Accelerator, which works to develop new COVID-19 therapies and testing in low- and middle-income countries.

Established in 2002 by hedge fund managers Chris Hohn and Jamie Cooper, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation is an independent philanthropic organization with offices in Addis Ababa, Beijing, London, Nairobi and New Delhi. It funds work in every corner of the globe except Oceania. In 2021, CIFF's grant disbursements totaled \$468 million, an increase of \$124 million compared to 2020. The foundation aims to improve the lives of children living in poverty in developing countries through strategies that have lasting impact. Funding areas include child health and development and sexual and reproductive health and rights. In 2021, the foundation joined with UNICEF to launch a \$100 million partnership to end child wasting.

One example of MasterCard Foundation's giving in this area was a \$55.5 million grant to the University of Rwanda in 2021. The grant supports 1,200 Scholars (1,080 Rwandan and 120 pan-African) in the Scholars Program with a focus on STEM fields.

The Dell Foundation funds education projects in the United States, South Africa and India. In India, the foundation focuses on improving school results

for underserved students and increasing their access to a high-quality education. With more than 140 million students, India's education system is one of the largest in the world. On average, a typical student is at least two grades behind the expected level for their grade. To address these challenges, the foundation supports the systemic transformation of public schools in four Indian states: Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. "Nine million children in around 90,000 schools are impacted by the systemic programs in four states," said the foundation's Prachi Windlass. "This is a huge opportunity."

Funder Spotlight



CHILDREN'S INVESTMENT FUND FOUNDATION

The Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) is the world's largest philanthropy solely focused on improving children's lives and has an endowment valued at over \$6 billion after charitable activities and costs. The foundation's child-centered giving focuses on health and well-being, sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equity, climate change, and ending crimes against children such as child labor and sexual exploitation. Its current multi-year grant commitments across all programs total \$2.18 billion, with its largest investments going to support efforts in climate change (\$847M), child health and development (\$793M), and sexual and reproductive health and rights (\$402M). Regionally, organizations working or located in sub-Saharan Africa have received the largest amount of multi-year commitments (\$818M).

Advocacy. Foundations also support advocacy efforts on global development issues. Although it's difficult to quantify the level of total philanthropic funding in this area, Open Philanthropy hazarded a

guess: in the ballpark of \$100 million annually.

Global development organizations engage in advocacy at local, national and international levels.

On its website, Open Philanthropy lists organizations that "do considerable advocacy or lobbying in favor of [U.S.] foreign aid programs."

Topping the list is the advocacy group ONE, with a global annual budget of roughly \$30 million, followed by RESULTS, Bread for the World, Friends of the Global Fight, and US Global Leadership Coalition. Think tanks like the Center for Global Development also work in this space.

In an Inside Philanthropy survey of fundraising professionals conducted in 2020, 4 in 10 respondents involved in global development said the philanthropic sector's support for advocacy, policy and support for broad-based movement organizing is more talk than action. About a quarter said an increasing amount of funding is going to advocacy and 1 in 5 said there has been little change in funding amounts for advocacy work.

In an OECD survey in 2018, in which 103 foundations participated, 84 foundations supporting global development said their institution engages in advocacy. More than two-thirds of the foundations that engaged in advocacy (59 of the 84, or 70%) reported using advocacy to mobilize more funding and to find partners by increasing the visibility of a cause. A smaller share (38 of the 84, or 45%) use advocacy to ensure that citizens are equipped with the information, oversight and tools they need to hold political representatives accountable. Finally, at a time when restrictions on domestic and cross-border philanthropy are growing, two-fifths of respondents that engage in advocacy use it to promote an enabling environment for philanthropy (34 of the 84, or 40%)."

The Big Issues and Beyond

Some issues in global development giving are perennial. Relatively few U.S.-based foundations distribute funds outside of America, and those that do say that inspiring other funders to give internationally amidst pressing challenges at home is always an uphill battle. Added to the mix is the increasing rhetorical backlash to philanthropy's "colonialism" and demands that funders of global development move toward supporting locally-led actors rather than massive multinational NGOs. All of this is further complicated by the challenges of working within many nations that have strong undercurrents of antidemocratic, anti-equity cultural forces.

Other issues are tied to current debates in the global development field and how to deal with them, including how to handle debt and whether or not "effective altruism" is a concept that provides any new insights into directing philanthropic resources.

Sovereign debt. The COVID pandemic spawned not only a global health crisis, but also a global economic crisis that is exacerbated by broken food and supply chains as a result of Russia's war in Ukraine. Hardest hit are low-income countries, with prices climbing and unemployment soaring, including 22 million jobs lost in sub-Saharan Africa alone in just one year. What's more, a debt emergency looms. During the pandemic, desperate governments turned to expensive, short-term emergency loans from the International Monetary Fund, China and private lenders. After a decade of low interest rates that allowed low-income and emerging-market countries to improve infrastructure, smooth spending across the economic cycle, and in many cases, to buy political support and help governments remain in office, the skyrocketing cost of debt, with payments up 45%

since 2021, now threatens to overwhelm already hard-hit countries.

Martha Ramirez [reported](#) in IP in 2022 on one philanthropic effort to make a difference on sovereign debt. Funders Organized for Rights in the Global Economy, or FORGE, a philanthropic donor collaborative dedicated to building a global economy that works for all people and the planet, announced its first round of grants on the topic in early 2022.

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"There should be a deliberate efforts made towards funding advocacy and movement based programming, since this amplifies the voices of vulnerable communities to demand for their rights. This action is a sure sustainability mechanism for projects, since it brings about meaningful participation and ownership."

—Fundraiser, Kenya

Launched in 2020 as a response to the pandemic and the subsequent economic fallout, FORGE seeks to align funds to make a more meaningful impact on issues like natural resources, climate change, corporate accountability and human rights. Backers include stalwart U.S. progressive funders like Ford Foundation, Omidyar Network, Open Society Foundations and Wallace Global Fund. Other supporters are Fundación Avina, a foundation that supports sustainable development in Latin America; the Laudes Foundation, which addresses inequality and climate change; Humanity United, True Costs Initiative, and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund. The SAGE Fund, itself a philanthropic collaborative focused on human rights in the global economy, is leading the collective grantmaking for FORGE and providing members with educational resources.

Grantees include the Bretton Woods Project, which has launched an initiative to pressure two key international financial institutions – the IMF and World Bank – to reform in ways that address unsustainable sovereign debt and create more just economics. The Center for Legal and Social Studies (CELS) is running an Argentina-based project that will explore how sovereign debt has impacted human rights in the South American country and will also seek to strengthen standards regarding sovereign lending and debt restructuring so that they are consistent with human rights obligations. The European Network on Debt and Development (EURODAD) will work with fellow debt justice movement networks around the globe to reform the global sovereign debt architecture.

This structure creates a vicious, dysfunctional and unjust cycle, wrote Julie McCarthy and Vanessa Jimenez for OSF, with “debt leading to default, leading to draconian cuts in public services, leading to more debt.”

Advocate Spotlight



Hosted by ActionAid UK, the Bretton Woods Project describes itself as a civil society network that, among many other things, “works to amplify the voices of marginalised populations with a focus on the Global South.” Operating as a key watchdog of the IMF and World Bank, Bretton Woods has five strategic objectives, including increasing the accountability, transparency and responsiveness of the IMF and World Bank and to better equip civil society to challenge both institutions as a part of an overall strategy to invoke change. Supporters of the project include the Hewlett Foundation, Mott Foundation and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

“Key challenges underpinning the current debt crisis include opacity around sovereign debt deals, predatory lending by private creditors, and the lack of common rules and expectations around equitable and sustainable sovereign debt restructuring,” wrote McCarthy and Jimenez. They outlined OSF’s campaign, which includes both a focus on short-term gains, as well as moves to target the root causes of poverty and injustice embedded in the international financial architecture.

Effective Altruism. Effective altruism is a philosophy and quasi-community of funders that uses an evidence-based approach to help philanthropists know where to spend to do the most good. Its basic tenets hold that all lives are equally valuable and those with resources should allocate them to helping as many people as possible. A related philosophy is “long-termism,” a moral imperative to positively influence the long-term future. This concern about the issues faced by generations hundreds or thousands of years to come has led some EA proponents to focus less on “here and now” hardships like poverty and hunger, and more on the possibilities of malevolent artificial intelligence.

Big EA givers have included Facebook and Asana cofounder Dustin Moskovitz and his wife Cari Tuna. The couple’s Good Ventures has disbursed approximately \$2 billion since 2011 and moves about \$200 million out the door each year. Instead of employing its own staff, Good Ventures relies on the research and recommendations of two organizational partners, Open Philanthropy and GiveWell.

GiveWell conducts and provides research on where donors, including Moskovitz and Tuna’s Open Philanthropy, should give that will do the most

good. It also collects donations and passes them on at no cost to the donors to selected charities based on that research. This Top Charities Fund, formerly called the Maximum Impact Fund, has directed funding to Against Malaria Foundation, Sightsavers and other deworming organizations, and Helen Keller International. GiveWell invited controversy when it made the decision to roll over \$110 million from 2021 to 2022 because it could not find enough opportunities meeting its standard of efficacy: five to eight times higher than cash transfers.

Among GiveWell's most vocal critics, according to Devex's Stephanie Beasley, "is nonprofit cash transfer organization GiveDirectly. [GiveWell's Ben] Bateman said GiveWell considered granting GiveDirectly the money 'that we're unable to spend at our current bar' before eventually deciding to keep it for 2022."

In a blog post following the announcement, GiveDirectly Managing Director Joe Huston wrote that "we think GiveWell is thinking too small, undervaluing what can be achieved today, underestimating the costs of waiting, overestimating how much better they'll allocate funds in the future, and not accounting for the perspectives of people living in poverty."

Effective altruism's other prominent adherent was now disgraced cryptocurrency exchange FTX CEO Sam Bankman-Fried, who promised he would eventually donate almost all of his net worth, once estimated at \$24 billion. In November 2022, Bankman-Fried's world imploded when FTX collapsed and filed for bankruptcy. In December, Bankman-Fried was arrested and charged with defrauding customers and violating campaign finance laws. Some of his giving is being clawed back to repay those he allegedly defrauded.

Funder Strategies & Trends

Funders don't just give grants. They use their power, relationships, assets and knowledge to shape the field, even if they often rhetorically minimize their influence. Some are increasingly open about their power and how they use their wide-ranging resources in addition to their grantmaking budgets to affect change. Some of the ways our experts named most often include responsible investing practices, localizing grantmaking away from (or adding onto their support for) multinational NGOs, trust-based practices, participatory grantmaking and investing in developing greater understanding of intersecting identities that impact program effectiveness.

Responsible investing and mission-related investing. In the United States, foundations are required to disburse at least 5% of their assets in grants annually. Increasingly, many of these institutions are putting the other 95% to use in socially responsible investing, gradually moving away from investments that undermine their ideals, whether they be climate change, racial and gender equity, labor practices or other concerns. This trend is found across philanthropy, including in the global development arena. Another philanthropy-wide trend that shows up in global development is impact investing through Program-Related Investments (PRIs). This set of financial instruments, including loans, equity investments and guarantees, can be counted as part of the 5% payout requirement and still provide a financial return as long as the primary purpose of the transaction advances the foundation's charitable purposes, as opposed to prioritizing financial gain.

Dell is a forerunner among foundations in the impact investing space in India. Soon after starting its operations in India in 2006, the foundation saw

an opportunity to boost urban microfinance in India and zeroed in on investment, alongside grants and technical assistance, as a tool to catalyze the market. Another of Dell's impact investing initiatives in India is the foundation's December 2013 equity investment in LabourNet, alongside its co-investor Acumen. According to Dell's website, LabourNet has established itself as the largest independent vocational training provider for informal sector jobs in India, having trained and certified over 600,000 students cumulatively since the foundation's investment.

In 2017, the Ford Foundation made a \$1 billion commitment to impact investing, the largest effort among all foundation endowments. Five years later, in August 2022, Ford's President Darren Walker wrote that the foundation's "Mission Investments portfolio has generated measurable social impact across all of our areas of investment." Two of these areas fall under the global development rubric, financial inclusion in emerging-market countries and health tech in the Global South. In emerging-market countries, Ford's "financial inclusion fund managers have reached over 76 million consumers," Walker wrote, "helping to provide them access to savings, remittance, insurance and other financial products.

Localization. Another strategy in which donors are increasingly interested is the idea of localization in development funding. These efforts aim to support local organizations on the ground in the Global South, rather than providing funding to organizations based in donor states like the United States and the United Kingdom.

Proponents say localized grantmaking is both more equitable and more effective. "EMpower only funds local organizations," said Cynthia Steele, President

of EMpower, the Emerging Markets Foundation, "most of which are community-based, because by being embedded in the community, they are most aware of what the issues are and what will work and what will not work. They are also there for the long term," so they have the sustainability and permanence necessary to make real change.

Initiative Spotlight



The overarching mission of the True Costs Initiative is to increase corporate accountability and strengthen legal systems by driving collaboration among key stakeholders in the Global South. While the initiative focuses its work on the Global South, it supports grantee partners in the U.S. as well. With a strong focus on local communities as key change agents, True Costs and its partners work to actively protect communities against exploitative activities and practices by corporations that cause direct harm to local people and environments. Current grantee partners include First Peoples Worldwide, Climate Critical Earth and the Descendents Project.

However attractive the idea is, philanthropic donors, especially smaller funders intimidated by added layers of international grantmaking accountability, face challenges in improving the localization ratio. According to a report produced by the Council on Foundations and Candid that examined giving by U.S. foundations overseas, "roughly 13% of U.S. foundations' global grant dollars went directly to organizations based in the country where programs were implemented in the 2016-2019 period, up marginally from approximately 12% in the 2011-2015 period."

Trust-Based Philanthropy and Participatory Grantmaking. Other strategies to shift – or at least share – power in grantmaking include the various practices associated with “[trust-based philanthropy](#)” and, separately, participatory grantmaking. Advocates for trust-based philanthropy say it goes way beyond just giving multiyear, general operating support as much as possible. As guest contributors Chernor Bah and John M. Kabia wrote in *Inside Philanthropy* in 2021, “global philanthropy remains largely an elitist, top-down process: Foundation boards and staff, usually based in the Global North, make funding decisions that affect people in the Global South. That colonial model, however, is starting to change.” The authors’ two organizations, the African-rooted feminist hub Purposeful and the Fund for Global Human Rights – partnered to pilot a participatory grantmaking initiative with youth in Sierra Leone. Through the process, they became active learning and listening partners with children and young people.

Program Spotlight



Mama Cash offers its grantees long-term, flexible support and gives them “the space to use their money as they see fit.” Its largest program, the Resilience Fund, awards grants between €5,000 to €50,000 per year and gives priority to smaller and emerging feminist groups. Grants are made with the intention of offering support over multiple years. Recent grantees include Backyard Politics in Thailand and Black Womxn Caucus in South Africa. Many grantees are not identified on the Mama Cash website because providing information about their activism could expose the grantees to danger.

Some have dubbed Netherlands-based Mama Cash, which supports women, girls, and trans and intersex people who fight for their rights, the world’s “largest fully participatory grantmaker.” As Mike Scutari [reported in IP](#) in 2021, Mama Cash fast-tracked its embrace of participatory grantmaking beginning in 2018, when it piloted the Spark Fund, in which a rotating committee of activists directed support for feminist initiatives in the Netherlands. It also launched the Solidarity Fund, in which leaders from global women’s funds participated in every stage of the grantmaking process, including designing the fund, applying for funding, and reviewing and selecting the grantees. Buoyed by the success of these pilot funds, Mama Cash’s leaders decided to fully transition to a participatory model.

Mama Cash implemented what grants manager Coco Jervis called a “two-step process” for participatory grantmaking. In the first step, applicants provide input and guidance on which issues Mama Cash should prioritize. “This model facilitates both a wide range of activists setting our grantmaking priorities each year so that we can stay alert and responsive to changing contexts and needs of various types of feminist actors and movements,” Jervis said.

All of these strategies—localization, trust-based philanthropy, participatory grantmaking—are strands in a larger fabric of efforts to decolonize aid, what the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership defines as “a call from many humanitarian actors for a fundamental shift in power and resources, grown out of concerns that the current international aid system is part of a colonial construct that operates on Western terms and from Western points of view, perpetuating power imbalances between the Global North and Global South.”

Recognizing Intersectionality. Another trend in philanthropy across geographies is an increased recognition of the need for intersectional approaches that recognize that people do not lead single-issue lives and are affected by intertwined layers of oppressions. “Funders cannot be siloed in their approach,” said Cynthia Steele, president of EMpower, the Emerging Markets Foundation. “Empower doesn’t focus on climate change” per se, she said, “but the grantees we support are very much affected by climate change. They are on the front line of dealing with this in their communities,” and our grantmaking has to take that into consideration, she said.

Perspectives on Equity

A great deal of global development philanthropy aims to address issues of [equity or justice and fairness](#) with focused attention on the vulnerable and marginalized. While racism usually plays out differently in the global context from the environment in the United States, discrimination and other power differentials between groups are, unfortunately, universal. People who are seen by dominant groups as different – based on the language they speak, the customs they practice, and often immutable characteristics such as skin color and ethnicity – are subjected to inequities: the “withholding of respect, status, honor, attention, privileges, resources, benefit of the doubt, and human kindness,” according to author Isabel Wilkerson in her 2020 book *Caste*.

Some funders are directly addressing racial inequity in global development. Moore Impact, a collaborative partner and 501(c)(3) exempt entity under Moore Philanthropy, is fiscal sponsor and partner of the Racial Equity Index. The REI initiative is producing an index and advocacy tools that will provide greater accountability for racial

equity within and across the global development sector in order to dismantle structural racism and create a more equitable system and culture with justice and dignity at its core.

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“[Democratization of philanthropy] Is when philanthropy contributes to improving the overall well-being of people and the planet. Not just funding one-off programs, or diversifying their board but looking at how to help communities improve from a long-term livability perspective. Looking at guidelines like the World Happiness Report and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.”

–Nonprofit Consultant, Troy, Michigan

“The opportunity in working with the Racial Equity Index is really about investigating at the heart of the implementation: What are the textures of humanity, what are the ways in which people are silenced, what are the ways people are invited to the table, and what does that invitation look like?” said Masana Mulaudzi, a peer reviewer for the REI. “This radical investigation of our ways of working and undoing our ways of working is an opportunity for philanthropists to put their money where their mouths are.”

In addition to racial and ethnic equity, philanthropy addresses a range of equity issues, including discrimination against women and girls, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people, low-income people, religious minorities, rural residents, and immigrants and refugees.

The OECD’s data on private philanthropy for development shows that in 2017, 15% of philanthropic funding from 26 of the largest foundations worldwide had the objective of supporting gender equality and women’s

empowerment, which amounts to \$900 million for that year. In addition, 5% of philanthropic giving was identified as having gender equality as a primary objective and another 11% as having gender equality as a secondary objective.

Development projects aimed at gender equity cover the gamut, from health and reproductive health to pay equity, education, economic opportunities, entrepreneurship, digital inclusion and more. Efforts to end gender-based violence, a persistent global scourge, are central to the development strategies of several major funders. The COVID-19 pandemic has coincided with an increase in rates of GBV, to the extent that many observers deem it a “shadow pandemic.”

Two major funding initiatives on gender equity, Equity Can’t Wait and Co-Impact’s Gender Fund, were announced in 2022 (see Deeper Dive section, above).

The most recent analysis produced by the Global Philanthropy Project, the “2019–2020 Global Resources Report: Government & Philanthropic Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Communities,” reported that \$184 billion in grants supported work on these issues in the Global South and East. This figure includes funding by 499 foundations and 17 donor governments and multilateral agencies, and is about half of the dollar total of grants supporting LGBTQ+ work in the Global North, \$361 billion. Excluding grants supporting work in the United States, top givers in this space include OSF, Elton John AIDS Foundation, Arcus, Ford and the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.



Funder Spotlight

Michael & Susan Dell
FOUNDATION

The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation broadly encompasses global development-related matters through its grantmaking and investments. With poverty alleviation at the center of its giving, Dell aims to break generational cycles of poverty through access to high quality education, removing barriers to family health and well-being, access to quality jobs, and improving financial stability. Globally, the foundation awards grants to organizations working in India and South Africa.

A Closer Look at Funder Types

Private Foundations

While still small in comparison to support from national governments, private foundations are a growing portion of financial contributions to global development NGOs. The Gates Foundation leads the pack in terms of the sheer size of its grant portfolio in the development arena. Other large U.S. foundations in this space include the Ford, Rockefeller, Open Society, Hewlett, Packard and Conrad Hilton foundations, plus Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Open Philanthropy Project.

Smaller than these in asset size but not in vision or purpose, private foundations like the Wallace Global Fund also make an impact globally. A longtime focus of WGF has been to break the silence around female genital mutilation and drive toward a global tipping point so that the harmful practice is finally eliminated. Embedded in the foundation's women's rights and gender justice program, the WGF has catalyzed and supported regional networks of organizations and activists committed to ending FGM around the world.

Another global development funder, smaller yet, is the Segal Family Foundation, which supports economic, education and youth development work in East Africa. After data analysis revealed that organizations founded and led by expatriates grew twice as fast as those led by Africans, the foundation created the African Visionary Fellowship to disrupt this paradigm and shift power and agency closer to the beneficiaries of development work. SFF puts local leaders and local solutions at the heart of their grantmaking, believing in its partners' ability to

design the most effective, locally appropriate solutions to poverty in their communities.

In 2020, SFF made general support grants to organizations like Shule Direct in Tanzania, which provides Tanzanian-based e-learning opportunities; Biraturaba, which supports Burundian communities to become economically autonomous and to participate effectively in the management of public affairs by fighting against ignorance and indifference; and Akili Dada in Kenya, a leadership incubator investing in girls and young women from underprivileged backgrounds who have a passion for social change.

The Summit Foundation of Washington, D.C., is another smaller funder making an impact internationally. Its Equality for Women and Girls program provides grants principally in Central America, with the majority of support going to Guatemala and Honduras, followed by Belize and Nicaragua. Summit grants aim to build leadership of girls and women, increase local organizations' capacity to drive change, and advocate for policy reform, implementation and adequate resource allocation. One of the foundation's focus areas is ending child marriage, rates of which have remained stubbornly stagnant in the mesoamerican region. Grantees include the Central America and Mexico Youth Fund (also known as the CAMY Fund), and the Foundation for Ecodevelopment and Conservation in Guatemala.

Corporate Funders

Corporate funders are big players among private philanthropic entities in global development. In 2019, 78% of global companies considered the SDGs sufficiently important that they engaged senior executives on how the goals relate to business, according to a survey by Chief Executives

for Corporate Purpose (CECP). Nearly all the companies in the CECP global giving survey that made international contributions deemed it extremely important to work toward the SDGs.

Sixty-two percent of all companies that responded to the GX Survey directed at least one grant to international end recipients in 2021. Sixty-two percent of those companies that made international community investments had revenues above \$5 billion. These larger companies were more likely to have a network of locally administered foundations that could create local partnerships on the company's behalf.

According to CECP, 92% of information technology companies made international grants in 2021, along with 73% of consumer discretionary companies and 71% of financials companies. Utilities were the least likely sector to make international grants.

Top corporate givers include the Coca-Cola Foundation, Citi Foundation, the PepsiCo Foundation, the IKEA Foundation, the Wal-Mart Foundation and the MetLife Foundation. Certain sectors in international development are safe bets for corporate funders—that is, they are noncontroversial—including hunger, food systems, financial infrastructure, and microfinance.

Corporate funders from banking and finance are more likely to support related projects. Food and beverage companies are more likely to support food and agriculture. Resource extraction corporations, such as Exxon and Shell Oil, give to address local issues in places where they do business.

In 2020, the Cargill Foundation increased its giving by 90% to \$115 million. The largest privately held

global corporation in the U.S., with revenues of \$100 billion across agriculture, food, financial and industrial divisions, Cargill focuses its global giving on food security. Two of its major international farming partnerships center on empowering women in agriculture: She Feeds the World, a partnership with CARE, and Hatching Hope, a leadership initiative with Heifer International.

Cargill is not alone in seeing agriculture as a key solution to building financial security for women and ending food insecurity. Inside Philanthropy has covered both the [PepsiCo Foundation](#) and the [Mastercard Foundation's](#) efforts to lift women's lives through farming. The MasterCard Foundation is an independent, private foundation based in Toronto, Canada. It was established through MasterCard Worldwide's initial public offering in 2006. The MasterCard Foundation advances financial inclusion and youth learning in Africa.

Funder Spotlight



IKEA Foundation

The Ikea Foundation aims to improve the lives and livelihoods of families living in some of the world's most vulnerable regions. It has given €1.6 billion in grants and donations “to create a better future for children and their families.” The foundation works at the intersection of improving global economic development and climate change and focuses its giving on rural and refugee livelihoods, employment and entrepreneurship, access to renewable energy, and climate action.

As the Scholars Program seeks to realize sustainable progress, systems change is also an ultimate goal. Phil Cotton, the foundation's director of human capital development, told IP that the work to bring about socioeconomic transformation “aims not just

to support young Africans, but to strengthen the education systems and institutions that exist to serve them.”

It’s also opening doors that were once closed. “We are increasingly collaborating with African higher education institutions to deliver and scale high-quality learning that is relevant, accessible and inclusive,” Cotton said.

Another corporate funder in the global hunger space is PepsiCo Foundation. Its Food for Good program is the foundation’s global platform for advancing food security and making nutritious food accessible. According to the foundation, Food for Good has delivered more than 245 million meals to over 41 million people around the world. In addition, PepsiCo has given CARE more than \$18 million for its She Feeds the World program, which aims to improve the food security and nutrition of poor rural households, with a strong emphasis on women small-scale producers.

The Caterpillar Foundation, established in 1952, is the philanthropic arm of the heavy machinery company Caterpillar. It supports organizations that alleviate the root causes of poverty, focusing on education, the environment and basic needs. Its Access to Basic Services program seeks to “help communities gain access to the basic services like water and energy that allow them to grow stronger

and become more productive.” Caterpillar’s partners in this area include Water.org and Charity.org.

Not all corporate donors are large-scale, international companies. As Liz Longley [reported](#) in IP in July 2021, one California-based financial services company, PIMCO, has long directed its philanthropy to global hunger. That year, it made a five-year, \$10 million funding commitment to alleviating global hunger through the Global FoodBanking Network, a London-based nonprofit. The pledge is the largest in the foundation’s 20-year history, and builds on an existing three-year, \$3.5 million partnership with the organization.

Community Foundations

Principally through their offerings of donor-advised funds, community foundations are a notable source of private support for international development efforts. Their grants tend to support large, established institutions.

The largest donor in this category is the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, which Candid reported distributed \$248 million in grants for international development between 2016 and 2020. Grants in 2022 included \$20 million to Mama Cash; over \$16 million to Evidence Action; \$5 million to the Brazil Foundation; \$5 million to Sao Paulo’s Instituto Visão Futuro; \$5 million to Mercy Corps;

Program Spotlight



In 2019, the PepsiCo Foundation awarded CARE an \$18.2 million grant to improve gender equity in the agriculture sector through the She Feeds the World (SFtW) program. SFtW provides resources and training to over 5 million women farmers and their families. SFtW’s initial work in Uganda concluded in 2022, however the program has expanded to other countries including Egypt, Peru, Thailand, Vietnam and India.

and \$3.5 million to Leadership, Effectiveness, Accountability and Professionalism Africa, in Nigeria.

Another large community foundation, the Seattle Foundation, also makes grants internationally for development. Recipients in 2022 included the World Food Program USA, Mercy Corps and the ONE Campaign. Between 2016 and 2020, the foundation gave \$15.8 million through support for the World Food Program, Mercy Corps, Global Partnerships and others.



Prospera's 44 members dedicate an average of \$120 million per year to advance the rights of women, girls and trans, non-binary and intersex people around the world. Members include well known funders in this space such as the Global Fund for Women, Astraea, Mama Cash and the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights. Prospera network members are located in major regions around the world such as MENA, Latin America, Asia, and Europe.

Between 2016 and 2020, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation provided \$36.7 million in grants for global development through support for World Vision, Care, Save the Children Federation, Feed the Children and others.

Notable in the community foundation category are the dozens of women's funds. Prospera, a network of women's funds, boasts 44 member funds in 37 countries working at the community, regional and international levels. Perhaps the largest women's fund is the Global Fund for Women, whose mission is to provide more money, resources and decision-

making power to movements and shift power toward women, girls and all marginalized people worldwide. In 2022, GFW awarded \$17 million in 411 grants in 85 countries.

Major Donors

In its annual report on philanthropy, Giving USA reported that large gifts to U.S. charities by some of the wealthiest Americans reached a total of nearly \$15 billion in 2021. These types of megagifts (defined in Giving USA 2022 as gifts of \$450 million or more) represent about 5% of all individual giving in 2021.

Individual donors are attracted to global development organizations and projects at least in part because the needs around the globe are so great and addressing global crises like hunger is not controversial. Celebrities have used their fame and connections and financial resources, to raise funds and attention to catastrophes in the Global South. Band Aid and Live Aid concerts in the 1980s raised millions for famine relief in Africa (although the effectiveness of these funds has been questioned.) Irish rocker Bono has raised the profile of HIV and poverty, especially in Africa. Actor Matt Damon co-founded Water.org with the goal of providing safe water and sanitation for everyone. Actor George Clooney and wife and human rights lawyer Amal Clooney cofounded the Clooney Foundation, whose Waging Justice for Women initiative fights for equal rights for women in the courts with women-led local organizations in Africa.

MacKenzie Scott, formerly married to Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, has donated billions of dollars for unrestricted support to a growing list of domestic and international nonprofit organizations. In the seven months before Nov 14, 2022, Scott gave \$2 billion to more than 300

organizations, bringing her total giving to around \$14 billion. Scott has donated to numerous global development organizations, including Innovations for Poverty Action, mentioned above, Ashoka, the global network of social entrepreneurs, Namati, a legal empowerment and training network, and Luminos, which conducts an accelerated learning program that helps children catch up to grade level, reintegrate into government schools, and prepare for lifelong learning in five African countries. Several additional grant recipients – such as Ushahidi, Digital Green, Kiva and TechSoup Global Network – are focused on leveraging tech to improve people’s lives.

Other Scott grantees work on the empowerment of women and girls worldwide. Two early Scott gifts, given in 2020, empowered women and girls through education: one to Educate Girls in rural India and another to CAMFED in Africa. Like many recipients, CAMFED called the gift “transformational,” and said the support would tip the scales for gender equality on the continent, allowing it to educate 5 million more girls.

More recently, Scott supported Equality Now, which received \$15 million from Scott in 2022. The gift “will have a transformative impact on Equality Now’s ability to address gender discrimination by holding governments to account for enacting and enforcing laws and policies that end legal inequality, sexual violence and exploitation, and harmful practices like child marriage and female genital mutilation,” said Yasmeen Hassan, Equality Now’s global executive director. Women’s empowerment was a theme for Scott’s India giving, including through grantees like Ibtada and Study Hall Educational Foundation, and for most of the Latin American organizations Scott backed, including in places like Colombia (Fondo Lunaria

Mujer), Mexico (Instituto de Liderazgo Simone de Beauvoir) and across the region (Laboratoria).

Jim and Lisa Valone are Boston-based philanthropists whose wealth derives from investments in emerging markets. Lisa Valone spends her time supporting the U.N. Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund, as the co-chair of the #1000WomenLeaders Campaign, and Mercy Corps, as one of the founders of the Women’s Philanthropic Group. She is active in Women Moving Millions and the Network of Engaged International Donors (NEID). “After many years in the nonprofit world, both as a paid employee and volunteer in various roles from hands-on to board seats,” she told Women Moving Millions, “I now have the privilege of focusing my time on being a thoughtful and educated philanthropist.” Jim Valone’s interests are in youth education and sustainability. One of the EMpower foundation’s underwriters, he said his support of EMpower “gave me a way to give something back to emerging markets in a way that could really help their development over the long term. Second, it was a convenient and easy way to give something back. To have an organization that was doing the due diligence and the research to identify some very worthwhile grantee partners was very attractive to me.” He is involved with the Emerging Markets Investors Alliance, the Wellington Foundation, Pomona College, and Sudbury Valley Trustees.

Paul English is a tech founder and investor (Kayak, Boston Venture Studio) who has also been involved in the nonprofit sector for more than 20 years. English cofounded Summits Education, a network of 41 schools in Haiti, created in partnership with the Haitian Ministry of National Education and Partners in Health, a nonprofit where English serves as a director.

Elizabeth Sheehan is a former physician assistant who provided healthcare in the minefields of Cambodia and crowded hospitals in Africa. Sheehan funds clinics in some of the world's most challenging environments. In 2022, she joined the philanthropic collaborative Co-Impact Gender Fund, a 10-year, \$1 billion fund that aims to accelerate progress toward gender equality and women's leadership in the Global South. "I found my purpose long before I inherited wealth," Sheehan told Bold Voices. "I have seen that simple interventions lead to healthy families, and healthy families can lift themselves out of poverty. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to assist these families every day."

Intermediaries & Associations

Because giving directly to NGOs based in developing nations can be challenging, especially for mid-sized and smaller donors, intermediaries are a large presence in global development.

Organizations previously named in this brief — Oxfam America, Save the Children, UNICEF and United Nations Foundation, to name just a few — amass huge sums to distribute around the globe.

Intermediaries in the space include women's funds, public fundraising foundations that work to realize the power of grassroots women, girls and trans people around the world by providing them with financial and other resources to realize their vision of social justice. A global hub of women's funds, Prospera seeks to create opportunities for greater collaboration between its members and across sectors, develop technical skills and knowledge, and mobilize resources to strengthen and support women's funds to realize women's rights. Prospera has 44 international, regional and national women's fund members. Each year, Prospera's members mobilize an average of \$120 million to

advance the rights of women, girls and trans people and provide over 2,800 grants to women's organizations across 177 countries. Prospera itself does not make grants.

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"I see an unbelievable amount of time and money of funders spending to align their resources but very limited amount of funding going to support NGOs collaborating. The movement by MacArthur and others to support increased overheads is a great step in this direction but more needs to be done to incentivize and support NGO collaboration."

—Fundraiser, United States

The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) awarded almost \$10 million in grants and donations to 139 recipients in 34 countries across the continent in 2021. Founded in 2000, AWDF's grantmaking practices support the initiatives of African women who may not have access to mainstream funding due to capacity, language, location and marginalization. Its funders include Ford, Foundation for a Just Society, the Libra Foundation and the New Venture Fund. AWDF's 2021 annual report declared: "We are proud of our continued advocacy through participating in South-led partnerships that aim to decolonize funding ecosystems and our organizational journey to interrogate our funding practices."

Other intermediaries in the United States include foundations like EMpower, which focuses on marginalized young people in 15 emerging-market countries, recognizing that this cohort lacks resources and opportunities. Prioritizing the most marginalized, including girls, young women and LGBTQ+ youth, the foundation exclusively supports local organizations.

The global development sector is home to numerous affinity groups and funding networks. Among these is the Global Philanthropy Forum (GPF), a “peer-learning” network of philanthropists and social investors committed to advancing international causes. GPF was established in 2001 as a project of World Affairs, a nonprofit that convenes thought leaders, changemakers and engaged citizens to learn from one another and effect change. Since then, GPF has helped launch two affiliates, the Brazilian Philanthropy Forum and the African Philanthropy Forum, which connect indigenous philanthropists and social investors to build a learning community and to inform and enable their giving strategies in the countries and regions where they made their wealth. Today, the GPF has a membership in 98 countries. It is not a grantmaking organization.

The Network of Engaged International Donors (NEID) is a peer-to-peer network of global philanthropists. Based in Boston, the network has 180 members across 22 U.S. states and over 250 affiliated individuals who collectively give hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Members include foundations, philanthropic advisors, financial advisors and individual philanthropists. In addition to networking and educational opportunities, NEID hosts 11 giving circles, which together have given more than \$450,000 to 40 grassroots NGOs in 20 countries since 2017.

The Africa Grantmakers Affinity Group is a diverse group of funders with a range of strategies and approaches from local community organizations to international NGOs that work on the continent. AGAG is [closing its operations](#) in 2023 and does not make grants. Contributing members have included Ford, Hewlett, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Global Greengrants Fund and the Wallace Global Fund.

Launched in 2012, the Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD) convenes leaders in philanthropy and connects them with policymakers and OECD experts to address the world's most pressing development challenges. NetFWD's mission is to help foundations better collaborate with governments and each other. “Bringing foundations and governments closer together delivers far greater development outcomes, helps identify comparative strengths and encourages the philanthropic sector to become more transparent,” the organization's website says. It has more than two-dozen members, including Ford Foundation, Jacobs Foundation, Johnson & Johnson, W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Templeton World Charity Foundation. NetFWD, which does not itself make grants, hosts three working groups on the topics of education, health and gender.

Association Spotlight



NetFWD members are active in over 100 countries and share the common goal of maximizing their collective contributions to global economic and social development. Focusing on education, health and gender equality, netFWD fosters increased collaboration among its members and key stakeholders in global health and global development. The Rockefeller Foundation, Alexandria Trust and the Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development are among netFWD's founding members.

An Analysis of Opportunities & Challenges

Some of the most acute challenges to private global development philanthropy are the continuing effects of the COVID pandemic, Russia's war in Ukraine, the climate crisis, migration and increasing inequality. These combine to create a "polycrisis," defined in a report published January 11, 2023, by the World Economic Forum as "a cluster of related global risks with compounding effects, such as the overall impact exceeds the sum of each part."

The global pandemic and its secondary effects. Adding to the heart-wrenching numbers of deaths and illness COVID-19 has caused, the pandemic's impact "has been layered and multidimensional," wrote the Center for Disaster Philanthropy's Alex Gray and Sally Ray in 2022. Beyond the obvious public health effects, the pandemic resulted in "multitudes of secondary impacts such as supply chain issues, food insecurity, rising unemployment, an increase in gender-based violence, and mental health crises."

In India, for example, "before the pandemic, economic and development indicators like nutrition, employment and GDP growth were already declining," Ingrid Srinath, founder and director of the Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP) at Ashoka University told Candid. "Then, COVID-19 exacerbated all of them. We are still a long way away from being where we were economically and socially even in 2019."

By August 2022, the Center for Disaster Philanthropy's COVID-19 Response Fund had made grants totaling nearly \$40 million and is still planning additional rounds of funding. By

November 2022, Candid reported \$29 billion in global giving for pandemic response, relief and recovery efforts. While much of this money supported health-related aspects of the pandemic, significant support also arrived for efforts in the development area. As Gray and Ray wrote, COVID revealed inequities and injustices in new ways, and donors took notice. The pandemic pushed many foundations to fund in ways that departed from their traditional practices. Toward lowering barriers to resources, some increased payout percentages, some converted restricted grants to general operating support, some extended grant periods, some lifted other restrictions, and some did all of that and more.

Russia's war in Ukraine. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has sparked humanitarian and economic crises in Ukraine and other countries. The war has produced a need for massive humanitarian assistance, and philanthropy is helping, including with disaster assistance for newly displaced people, mental health support and protection support for vulnerable and marginalized people. In the global development realm, philanthropy is also responding to the global economic fallout, especially as it relates to world hunger, given the impact on the exportation of products from both Russia and Ukraine, major producers of food in Europe and Asia. Here again, the Center for Disaster Philanthropy has established a fund, the Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis Recovery Fund, to funnel support to the region. The grantmaking strategy is guided by the programmatic expertise of CDP's board, advisory council and staff, and an extensive network of international humanitarian experts.

Migration. People leave their home countries for myriad reasons: armed conflict and other violence, intimidation, climate change, natural disasters, gender inequity, economic scarcity and lack of jobs. Such factors are projected to rise in the coming decades, meaning millions more people will be moving on an unprecedented scale. The development sector will need to address both the root causes of human migration as well as the needs of people on the move and the impact migration has on receiving communities.

Inequality. According to the U.N., income inequality between countries has improved, but income inequality within countries has become worse. Today, 71% of the world’s population lives in countries where inequality has grown. Furthermore, inequalities are not only driven and measured by income, they are determined by such factors as age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and class. The U.N.’s Sustainable Development Goal No. 10, Reducing Inequality, provides a framework for addressing this challenge, but solutions will have to be country- and context-specific.

Philanthropist Frank Giustra has said he hopes more deep-pocketed funders will step up. “The inequality gap has gone through the roof,” he said in an IP piece by Ade Adeniji. “A lot of people are sliding down the other end of the scale. And I think that inequality is dangerous,” he says.

Governments agreed on reaching the SDGs by 2030, and until the confluence of crises in 2019 to 2022 and the slowdown in the global economy, progress toward the goals was on the march. Now, much of that progress – in rates of poverty, prevalence of hunger, measures of gender equity – has receded to levels measured in the mid-2010s.

But as IP’s Liz Longley [reported](#), the 2022 U.N. General Assembly and coinciding nongovernmental events sparked hope, with the announcement of numerous big-dollar donor commitments.

Experts say that aid programs are not the driving force behind development, but they can help support development progress as low-income countries develop economic and political infrastructure. In many areas, we’ve seen what works and need to redouble efforts. On all issues, innovation will be critical for delivering sustained, scalable solutions to the world’s complex problems. With more flexibility – and frankly, less accountability – than governments and multilaterals, private philanthropy has a crucial role to play in regaining lost ground.

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“The world is rapidly changing - how combinations of capital can be leveraged for greater impact while addressing the global crisis in health, racial justice, climate, education and inequity will change our future and the prioritization of philanthropic capital.”

—Fundraiser, United States

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Thank You

Thank you to these individuals who were interviewed:

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Feedback?

The State of American Philanthropy is an ongoing project. Each SAP brief will be updated periodically to integrate new information, additional data and evolving perspectives. This brief was originally posted to Inside Philanthropy in March 2023. If you have comments or information you'd like to share with us, please email us at managingeditor@insidephilanthropy.com.